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AUTHOR	Johnson, Milo P.
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ABSTRACT

The basis of the measurable institutional objectives approach to management by objectives is the college's educational philosophy. The output measures used are the units completed and grade averages. It is recognized, however, that some student learnings and support program objectives are currently unmeasurable. The Sample Class Plan for Projecting Output and Constraints is the method of setting Instructional output objectives. For this plan, each instructor selects one of his classes each semester as his sample class, and learning problems and ways of achieving objectives are discussed by the instructor and an administrator. Service function objectives are prepared by administrators and discussed with faculty-student committees. Output costs are considered in the light of learning constraints and institutional efforts to resolve them. An educational auditor is hired to sample the output statistics and interview faculty, staff and others. Copies of the Institutional Objectives Report to the Trustees are available from Mt. San Jacinto College. (KM)

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The Measurable Institutional Objectives Approach To Management By Objectives, Mt. San Jacinto College

The Measurable Institutional Objectives Approach To Management By Objectives Mt. San Jacinto College

San Jacinto, California 92383

By

Dr. Milo P. Johnson

Superintendent and President
Mt. San Jacinto Community College District

JC 740 045

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introduction

The measurable institutional objectives approach to management by objectives at Mt. San Jacinto College evolved over several years concurrently with efforts to develop measurable objectives for courses and an individualized instructional system using multi media. The development of a management by objectives system at this small community college has been undertaken without special funding or additional staffing.

From the first, Mt. San Jacinto College rejected the concept of using the management system device for mid-management or instructor evaluation. This stance, more than any other single factor, has been responsible for reducing faculty resistance to the system and then in gaining their cooperation and support.

educational philosophy serves as the basis

The statement of educational philosophy and mission statement of the college originally was recommended by a community advisory committee before faculty were even employed. It was adopted by the trustees before the college course offerings were selected. Since the initial formation of the statement, it has

been regularly reviewed; revised in response to recommendations by faculty-student committees, and by the Patrons Association; and readopted in a public meeting by the college trustees. This statement provides the bases for establishing all objectives for the college.

The use of a formal needs assessment questionnaire to sample community opinion and update the mission statement (used so extensively in the "participative management" model of management by objectives) has been rejected by Mt. San Jacinto College. The process is too time-consuming for the limited and possibly dubious results it achieves. An informal method for keeping a record of the classes and special services requested by students and community members is used in lieu of need assessment questionnaires.

output measures - units earned

One of the major stumbling blocks to utilization of a management by objectives system for education has been to find an appropriate output measurement device for instruction. Mt. San Jacinto College believes that: when college courses have measurable objectives for most of what students learn and grading criteria are specific, and both have been verified by

outsiders, the "units completed" and "grade averages" provide the most useful measures for instruction.

Note that measurable objectives are required for **most** of what the students learn if units are used for output measures. This idea recognizes that some student learnings are "currently unmeasurable." Some institutional support program objectives are also currently unmeasurable.

Certain course objectives and support program objectives may be unmeasurable because the outcomes cannot be reached within the reporting time period—usually a year. On the other hand, an objective may be currently unmeasurable because we do not know at this time how to measure the outcome.

To insure that the currently unmeasurable objectives for a class or for the institutional service programs are reasonable, a description of the experiences in which students participate to achieve the unmeasurable objectives is given.

Admitting that there are currently unmeasurable objectives has significantly reduced some faculty concerns about working toward an institutional objective, management by objectives system.

One objection to using "units earned" as an output measure, raised by some faculty members, was that many students

learned a great deal before they dropped out of class but they received no unit-credit; therefore, an output report would not credit the class with any learning by those students. A method of issuing partial credit (one or two units for a three-unit class) was suggested and eventually approved. In addition to its obvious advantages to students, including partial credit in the output statistics has more accurately reflected the actual learning which took place. Partial credit has better served the needs of some students because they can see short range objectives and their own accomplishments more clearly. Furthermore, if they had to withdraw from a class, they received credit on their transcript for the units already accomplished. It also satisfies the important educational principle that students receive units and grades for achieving objectives—not for "putting in time."

sample class plan sets class output objectives

To focus attention of all the professional staff in the college on the major institutional objective: "to assist as many students as possible to complete as many course objectives (earn as many units) as possible at the lowest cost," a plan involving all faculty and all ad-

ministrators in setting instructional output objectives was developed. This Sample Class Plan for Projecting Output and Constraints has been the primary vehicle of this effort. Here, each instructor selects one class he is scheduled to teach in the following semester and designates this his sample class. The following semester he selects a different class; thus, in three or four semesters all the courses taught can be studied as sample classes.

By the second week of the semester, the instructor and his administrative representative confer on major learning problems of the students in the sample class which have been identified by a pre-test, by an interview, by a questionnaire or by studying official records of each student. Together they look for clues which will help each student accomplish the course objectives and identify the obstacles or constraints that might keep some students from completing the course.

The immediate result of this conference session is the projection of output objectives and identification of constraints as reducible, or irreducible, during that semester.

The conference reports made by the administrator are given to the president and subsequently reported to the trustees. If confirmed at the end of the semester, the

principle irreducible constraints are made a part of the institutional objectives, and money and time budgeted toward reduction of that constraint during the next semester. End-of-the-semester reports help provide the institutional output statistics for the management by objectives achievement report presented to the trustees at the end of the second year. The report includes the cost per unit earned for each course taught, as well as an average cost per unit earned for the institution as a whole.

service function objectives

Program objectives have also been prepared by administrators, and discussed with faculty-student committees, for the Service Functions of the college: such as, Student Personnel and Community Services. They are stated in the Fall objectives report; and the accomplishment of the objectives and the program costs included in the year-end report made to the trustees and the community. The cost figures, when compared from year to year, provided a means of assessing the progress being made toward improving output in a cost effective manner and reducing constraints.

constraints

Output costs cannot be considered without making judgments about constraints. As a result of this process the college staff has kept the increase in the cost per unit earned to a percentage less than the rate of inflation during that period. In addition, during the first two years, the staff identified "lack of motivation" and "poor reading and writing basic skills" as the most significant learning constraints. Subsequently, the college has devoted time and resources to develop the "self actualization by group process" to help improve student motivation—with significant results. Poor reading and writing constraints are being resolved by expanding and revising the reading and writing laboratory. (It is too early to report results on this activity at this time.)

educational audit

To give greater credibility to the achievement report and gain the advice of an impartial outsider, the college president recommended the selection of an outside educational auditor by the trustees and the development of a set of educational audit specifications. The auditor was instructed

to sample the output statistics and interview faculty, staff and others. Finally, he made an oral report to the trustees in a public meeting, and prepared a detailed written report. These reports verified the accuracy of grading plans, course objectives and Service Function objectives and the output statistics.

The educational auditor selected was a university professor who had been a community college president, and had been a trained financial auditor. His suggestions for improving the management system, especially ways to make objective measurement more accurate, were very helpful.

The institutional objectives approach to management by objectives as applied at Mt. San Jacinto College has served to unify the staff development efforts by focusing on ways of increasing output and reducing constraints. It has improved management decision-making on program alternatives; basing decisions on knowledge of constraints encountered and the costs related to output.

institutional objectives report made available

A current **Institutional Objectives Report to the Trustees** is available each year to other schools and colleges who

may have an interest in developing a similar system. The printed report includes: a statement of college philosophy, objectives of the service functions, output predictions of per unit costs for classes taught, the educational auditor's report and measurable and currently unmeasurable objectives for five typical courses (approximately 100 pages, $7.50). Copies of the report may be obtained by writing the Mt. San Jacinto College, Multi Media Office, 21400 Highway 79, San Jacinto, California 92383.

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